

## Milano: what else?!

### General information

From the end of August up and till the end of December 2015 I have been studying at Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi in Milan, Italy, and I have had a great time! My courses started in the second week of September, but because of the introduction activities I recommend future exchange students to already depart to Milan two weeks in advance. I left just before Christmas, after having had my last week off, due to my relatively early exams.

### Preparation

Before I moved to Milan, the only thing I had to arrange was accommodation. I did not need a visa as I am an EU citizen. The best way to get a room in Milan is by checking the most important Facebook groups and commenting on the interesting rooms available. There are also other ways to get a room, but those are often more expensive. The only disadvantage of searching for rooms via Facebook is that it is possible that you accidentally get in contact with a fraud and therefore you have to be careful, but it is nothing to worry about. You can easily avoid to be set up by a fraud by asking the person to have a conversation about the room via Skype and by asking him or her for an ID, because then you know better who you are dealing with. Also it is very important that you never pay your rent or deposit in advance (so before having actually seen the room in real-life). However, I do not want to scare anybody because 99% of the rooms on Facebook are posted by 'normal' people.

I started to look for a room in May already and I found one in July, via Facebook. The apartment I have lived in was situated in Via Giulio Carcano, which is not far from the university. Speaking of location, I recommend you to search for a room near Porta Ticinese. This is the best location for an exchange student, but all rooms between my street, Porta Romana, the Dom (Duomo) and Porta Ticinese are also perfectly fine. Porta Ticinese is located in the Navigli area, which is a very enjoyable place to be at night to go out for dinner or to have a few drinks. There are always a lot of people around and I have had a lot of fun nights over there. By the way, the rent of most of the rooms in the area I described is between €600 and €750 per month. I was very lucky and found a cheaper one, but that is an exemption in my opinion.

These are the Facebook groups you should get into:

Bocconi Rents, ESEG MILANO Housing Service, Milano Easy Renting, ERASMUS MILANO 2015/2016, Students' accommodations in Milan and Milan Housing: rental flats, apartments and roommates.

## Arrival

As I have mentioned before, I moved to Milan two weeks before the start of my courses. I had also signed up for the Italian Language Crash Course, which implies 40 hours of Italian classes during two weeks and which I strongly recommend to take. I arrived in Milan 3 days before having my first Italian class. During the first days you have to get used to your new apartment, your neighbourhood and the city centre, but you should also get an Italian sim-card at a TIM or Wind shop. It is of course very useful to be able to access internet while exploring the city. The Bocconi University and the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) organise a lot of introduction activities. Some of them are more serious, like the tours through the city centre and the campus, but most of them have an important social aspect, like the speed-exchange during which I met a lot of other international students, and obviously there are a lot of parties for international students, so you will be very busy during your first weeks!

## Courses

During my exchange, I have taken the following courses:

- Monetary Theory and Policy (6 ECTS). This course was about the different policies of the Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank during the last 100 years and the theory behind these policies. It was the toughest course that I have taken and I think it is a little bit comparable to the second year course International Economics of the ESE, although there is more math involved, which makes the course more difficult. The professor and the set up of the course were very professional.
- Public Finance (6 ECTS). A part of the course content was already taught during the Applied Microeconomics course of the ESE, but I have also learned a lot of new things, which were e.g. about the American health care insurance market and government policy regarding this market and optimal tax reform and the trade-off between efficiency and equality.
- Technology and Innovation Management (6 ECTS). As an economics student, I had not really taken a management course earlier on in my life and as I am very interested in innovation, I took this course. It also created some more diversity in my curriculum. This course is about the theory behind innovation and about the ways to create a ideal innovation climate.
- Microeconomics (9 ECTS). At first I was determined to take the advanced microeconomics course, but then suddenly I was not allowed to, so I took a more basic microeconomics course. I would not recommend people to take this course, as it is too easy for third-year EUR-students.

I have incorporated these courses into my elective space.

## Finances

Below I will summarize my main cost of living in Milan and some other expenses of my exchange period:

- Flight ticket: 150 euros (roundtrip)
- Housing: 520 euros per month. I have lived in Via Giulio Carcano and I think I was very lucky with my room, considering the price/quality ratio. Most people pay a rent of 650-700 euros per month.
- Public Transport: 100 euros (total amount for 4 months)
- Mobile phone subscription: 70 euros (for 4 months, 3000 gb and 500 minutes)
- Going out: 200-250 euros (I have gone out a lot of times and drinks in the clubs are 10 euros, although most of the time you will get an ESN discount)
- Groceries: 200 euros (somewhat the same as in the Netherlands)
- Trips to other Italian cities: on average 100 euros per month

## Daily life

Life as an exchange student at Bocconi University is very awesome. I have had the time of my life. A few things that I already miss are for example:

- The aperitivi. 'Aperitivo' is the name of the concept that a restaurant provides an all-you-can-eat dinner and 1 free cocktail for only 8-10 euros. There are many restaurants which provide this kind of dinners every night, especially in the Navigli-area, which is the area most students often go to to hang out and have drinks.
- The beautiful city. Like most Italian cities, most buildings in Milan are built with that special Italian architecture. Of course, the cathedral in the city centre is amazing (especially if you are walking alone at the square in front of it at 6 a.m., because then it is lightened and there aren't any tourists bothering you).
- The clubs. In the Netherlands, there aren't any real clubs, only cafes. However, in Milan there are a lot of big clubs.
- My exchange friends. As an exchange student, you will make a lot of new friends and of course you have to say goodbye to them after 4 months, but I know for sure that some of them will be good friends of yours for many years. Try to get to know as many students as possible!